

**Virtual School Sensory Support are delighted to invite you to a Conference to celebrate 20 years of work in assessment, interventions and research into visual problems associated with Visual Stress (Meares Irlen Syndrome)**

Visual Stress, also known as **Meares Irlen Syndrome**, refers to signs and symptoms of visual stress which do not respond to conventional optometric treatment.

Visual stress may refer to visual discomfort, light sensitivity and headaches which occur as a result of exposure to disturbing visual patterns. The symptoms of Visual Stress are often reduced by the safe and non-invasive remedy of placing coloured filters (overlays or precision tinted lenses) over the text. Research has shown that reading speed and fluency in at least one in five people improves when an overlay is used. Appropriate diagnosis can lead to rapid outcomes in terms of improving reading skills and enjoyment of reading, which have implications for improving progress across the curriculum.

**Visual Stress Awareness Conference:**

**Date:** Friday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2016

**Time:** 9.30 – 4.00 pm

**Venue:** The Professional Development Centre,  
Woodside Road, Norwich.

**Cost:** The cost will be £40 for the first delegate from your school. Buffet lunch will be provided. Additional delegates from your school may attend for £20 if they do not need an assessment pack.

**Who is invited:** Your school may send as many delegates as you wish.

The conference welcomes SENCos, class and subject teachers, learning support assistants, governors, interested parents and other professionals from health, optometry, children's services.

The cost will include an assessment pack (including overlays, assessment materials, learner record book, information sheets and tips for classroom management). The Conference will provide workshops to introduce your staff to the assessment pack and Virtual School Sensory Support will undertake to provide bespoke training packages to your school or cluster group at a later date to ensure your staff feel confident to make full use of the pack when working with your own learners.

**We are delighted that two of the leading researchers in the field have agreed to speak at the conference.**

## **Keynote Speakers**

**Professor Arnold Wilkins will speak on Disturbing Vision.**

Professor Arnold Wilkins is currently Professor of Visual Perception at the University of Essex. He has carried out extensive research into visual disturbance, migraine and reading difficulty since the late 1970s and, while at the MRC in Cambridge, he invented the intuitive colorimeter, an instrument now widely used by optometrists to select precision tinted lenses. Arnold is the author of two books and many peer reviewed articles which may be found in scientific journals and via his website: [www.essex.ac.uk/psychology/departments/people/wilkins](http://www.essex.ac.uk/psychology/departments/people/wilkins)

**Dr Louise O'Hare will speak on current research on visual stress including an overview of the current literature.**

**To book your place onto the conference, go to [www.norfolks4s.uk](http://www.norfolks4s.uk) -  
course code: VSS-0716-T001**

**To reserve your additional place(s) and assessment kit please contact Claire Hogston at:**

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### **Programme:**

9:30 arrival and coffee  
9:45 welcome and housekeeping  
9:50 conference opening  
10:00 experiences of living with visual stress –learners, parents and staff in schools  
10:15 Arnold Wilkins  
“Disturbing Vision”  
11:10 coffee

12:20 images of visual stress  
12:40 question session with speakers  
1:00 lunch and exhibition  
1:50 Melanie Chilvers – Colorimetry – precision tinted lenses – the next step  
2:10 Liz Ashby VSSS ‘Using the pack to assess for visual stress’ Managing your classroom to reduce visual stress  
3:30 plenary  
3:45 close